

CITY OF VAUGHAN

DESIGN REVIEW PANEL

Minutes of Meeting

Meeting 92 – June 24, 2021

The Design Review Panel met virtually on Thursday, June 24, 2021. The meeting was recorded and will be posted on the City of Vaughan website.

PANEL MEMBERS

Present

Megan Torza, DTAH (Chair)

Sheldon Levitt, Quadrangle Architects Ltd.

Alfredo Landaeta, Forrec

Ute Maya-Giambattista, SGL Planning & Design Inc.

Fung Lee, PMA Landscape Architects Ltd.

John Tassiopoulos, WSP / MMM Group Limited

Absent

Guela Solow-Ruda, Petroff Partnership Architects

Margaret Briegmann, BA Group

Michael Rietta, Giannone Petricone Associates Architects

Peter Turner, Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Henry Burstyn, IBI Group

Paul Kulig, Perkins + Will (Vice Chair)

Wayne Swanton, Janet Rosenberg & Studio

STAFF

Amy Roots, Acting Director, VMC Program

Shahzad Davoudi-Strike, Acting Senior Manager, VMC Program

Jennifer Cappola-Logullo, Manager, VMC Program

Gerardo Paez Alonso, Manager, VMC Program

Gaston Soucy, Project Manager, VMC Program

Jessica Kwan, Senior Planner, VMC Program

Cory Gray, Project Manager, VMC Program
Musa Deo, Project Manager, VMC Program
Dana Khademi, Engineer, VMC Program
Danny Woo, Engineer, VMC Program
Alex Lee, Engineer, VMC Program

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am with Megan Torza in the Chair.

1. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

APPROVED unanimously by present members.

2. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

None

3. ADOPTION/CORRECTION OF MINUTES

Meeting Minutes for May 27, 2021 were approved.

4. DESIGN REVIEW

**Block 3S, QuadReal/Menkes, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre
High-Rise Mix-Use Development, 1st Review**

Architecture: Turner Fleischer Architects Inc.

Landscape: IBI Group

Review: 1st Review

Introduction

City staff sought Panel's advice on the following:

1. How can the architectural massing, scale and expression be improved to better convey the vision of the VMC Secondary Plan and the Urban Design Guidelines in creating a complete and diverse community?
2. How successful is the ground floor public realm strategy in contributing to the larger contextual design vision and intended uses of the future development to the north and park and open space network to the south.
3. How could the proposed architectural massing be better placed and sculpted to lessen the potential adverse microclimate impacts to the immediate and larger context?

Overview

- **Overall Presentation** - Panel thanked the applicant for a comprehensive package and presentation.
- **Tower Transition, Massing, and Heights** - The tower design is not providing adequate transitions from the high-rise development at the north to the future midrise developments and urban park to the south.
- **Architectural Expression** - The original conceptual vision has become challenging and probably unachievable as the water lily idea is not transferring to the architecture and will require more complex design and detailing to achieve.
- **Podium Massing** - The podiums would benefit from more openings, breaks, porosity, and animation to provide much needed variety along the longer elevations.
- **Site Organization** - The general organization of the plan and public realm, demonstrates a successful circulation strategy which allows for permeability and uninterrupted movement throughout the site.

Comments

General

- Panel thanked the applicant on a complete package and clear presentation.

Architecture

- Panel stressed that towers are not achieving a proper height transition from the development to the north to the future mid-rise scale and urban park envisioned to the south. The transition needs to be more significant so that the heights come down in a manner that avoids the currently proposed abrupt shift to a midrise scale.
- The massing of the three towers seems slender when seen from the north or south but is quite massive when seen from the east or west. Panel suggested reducing the tower floorplate areas to 750 square metres by cutting back from the respective north and south faces in order to step them back more and achieve a slenderer proportion which would also reduce overall shadow impacts on the site and the adjacent developments.
- Panel commented that it was brave to show the conceptual image of the water lily but that the actual architectural expression is not conveying that vision of calmness.
- Panel mentioned that the window wall towers on podiums are becoming ubiquitous in the VMC and that window wall is not the best product to finesse and detail the original vision of the water lily nor the desired "Miesian" style of the building. Panel expressed concern that the end product will look too severe and

to make it achieve the desired quality without looking “cheap” would require elaborate design and more expensive materials.

- The perception of calmness should come from beautifully designed towers characterised by the quality, scale and finishes of the building rather than an imagery that will be very hard to achieve.
- Panel encouraged the applicant to look at the successful planning of the ground floor to find inspiration and think differently as to what calm means.
- The story could become more about sustainability by addressing the façades differently and using passive systems that improve the quality of the proposal. For example, balconies could be used to play with the shape of the building. As well as provide much needed shade in the summer.
- The podium building needs more work as it currently feels more like background. More emphasis will need to be placed on analysing how the podium is functioning, how it is responding to specific site conditions and how it will be experienced by pedestrians.
- Panel commented that the podium massing should be better sculpted and treated to minimize the impact that it's having on the public realm and suggested that it could be designed with more care to animate and diversify the façades and overall expression.
- The proposed podium façade along Celebration Ave. is too monolithic. Panel suggested breaking up the façade by widening the mouth of the mews to respond to the mews opening at the development to the north and/or making some features more invisible. For example, by eliminating the bridge amenity above the mews or making it as thin as possible to allow for the mews opening to become more noticeable. This would contribute with the vision of creating a strong north-south thru-block connection which will be critical to the success of the proposed active use spine.

Site Organization, Connectivity and Land Use

- Panel agreed that the proposed circulation plan and porosity is believable and has the potential to tie together with what's being proposed to the north and south of the site.
- Panel observed that the west wing ground floor layout seems to be well resolved and responding better to the context and required functions than its east wing equivalent. It was suggested that the east wing should follow the design approach of the west wing in order to improve its functionality and efficiency.
- The mews feels a little bit pinched for the intended uses but might work if the uses are not envisioned to offer additional amenities.
- Panel was generally supportive of a retail spine along the mews. Nevertheless, Panel encouraged the applicant to explore whether the exclusive ground floor retail uses along the mews should continue south of Celebration Ave. and suggested looking into the possibility of having an entirely residential mews or a

mix of retail with other active uses such as amenity or community spaces, shared co-work areas, etc.

- Panel recommended looking carefully at Celebration Ave. to introduce a safe, pedestrian mid-block crossing that is in tune with the intended vision to have a north-south pedestrian spine from Highway 7 to the future central park to the south.
- The standalone retail unit between the mews and the POPS is an interesting idea that should be explored carefully by testing different sizes and configurations while addressing function and servicing issues such as loading and waste management. Perhaps as a simple standalone coffee shop pavilion or as a special structure that wraps around the east wing.
- The proposed residential units fronting the north side of the POPS should be reconsidered so that a more suitable active use is proposed along that important frontage. Panel recommended that the main tower lobby entrance might work better in that location.
- Panel suggested exploring the possibility of better integrating the POPS with the internal courtyard located directly to the north.
- It was mentioned that the passages on the west block that connect the inner courtyard to the two streets to the north and south are underwhelming and that the proposed podium entrances could be improved in plan and elevation to strengthen this connection.

Landscape

- Panel expressed appreciation for the richness of materials and thoughtfulness of the landscape proposal which seems to be following the vision originally established in the development to the north. Panel recommended carrying the same vision of being part retail and part outdoor amenity for the residents.
- Panel suggested revisiting the quantity, sizes, location and overall design of the mews planters to allow for more flexibility in use and opportunity for the retail to spill out onto the mews.
- The location of the POPS at the southeast corner is good as it will have excellent sun exposure throughout the year and be strongly connected with the future urban park to the south.
- It was recommended that, although microclimate conditions seem adequate for the intended uses, the north-west corner and the main amenity space will need to be looked at in order to mitigate potentially uncomfortable wind conditions.

Character and Land Use

- It will be imperative to the success of the project to better understand and develop the relationship between the project to the north and this development in order to integrate the two from a conceptual, physical, and functional standpoint.

- Celebration Ave. seems to have a predominantly residential character at the mews which is not conveying the message of a commercially active public area.
- Panel recommended looking at cross sections across Celebration Ave. into the development to the north; and across the future street to the south and into the urban park to better understand the scale and character of the spaces that the proposal is creating at an urban scale.

END OF MINUTES